

# LITERARY GEMS.

VOL. I.

THE SWEETS OF MANY A FLOWER.

NO. 26.

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On the 21st of October, 1812, I was a passenger in a diligence which, as it slowly ascended the hill at Autun, gave me leisure to examine a landscape of vineyards just stripped of their rich fruit,—a sad sight to one who had no interest in calculating the value of the produce. My fellow travellers were vulgar people, and, to our general misfortune, one of them was nursing a little boy, whom I should have considered a fine little child anywhere but in a public conveyance carrying nine inmates; of whom, however, there were yet only seven.

At a short distance from Autun we perceived, on our right, a magnificent country seat, whose principal avenue led to the high road. The lodge gate was wide open, and at its entrance stood a carriage, several saddle horses, and a group of individuals, consisting of elegant women, attended by well dressed men, and a host of liveried menials. The diligence stopped in front of the group, from which two servants advanced, the one carrying a large travelling trunk, the other a carpet bag, which the conductor stowed away upon the roof. While this was being attended to, a fine-looking young man was taking leave of the party. Two ladies and an old gentleman, who stood at a little distance from the rest, seemed to occupy the greatest share of his attention. The ladies were evidently mother and daughter; the young traveller held a hand of each, which he kissed alternately. At length that of the younger lady received the last kiss, and the old gentleman gently pushed the youth towards the door of the diligence, which the latter entered, and seated himself without paying any attention to its previous occupants; then thrusting his body half through the window, he seemed desirous not to lose a word addressed to him.

'A pleasant journey!' repeated several voices.—'In a week, at Beaupreau,' said the mother.—'Adieu, Maurice!' was added by a youthful and timid voice, more calculated to touch the heart than the ear. The traveller also repeated the word 'adieu' waving his hand and agitating his body, without seeming to care the least for the inconvenience to which he put his unhappy fellow-passengers. At length the diligence began once more to move, and, as there was a bend in the road, all further signals of leave-taking soon became impossible. M. Maurice now seated himself, and began to look at his fellow-travellers, who exam-

ined him in their turn, and seemed flattered by the elegance of his appearance. His figure was symmetry itself, and nothing could be more strikingly handsome than his features; but there was an expression of gay recklessness in his dark eye, and he smiled too often to be altogether to my taste; in short, there was a light-hearted joyousness in his countenance which vexed me, for I had begun by setting him down as a hero of romance. We had scarcely advanced two leagues further ere we knew that he was in the army; that his family dwelt in the Chateau de Beaupreau on the banks of the Drome; that the old gentleman in the avenue was his uncle, one of the richest landowners in Burgundy, at whose house he had just spent six weeks with the Countess of T\*\*\* and her daughter Augusta; that he had been betrothed to the latter from her infancy, because their estates lay contiguous; that he was going to make preparations for their marriage, which was to take place a fortnight after, at the chateau of the countess; and, lastly, that he was going to resign his commission, in order to live six months in the year, in the quiet of philosophy, upon his own estate, and six months as a courtier at Paris. Education and good manners prevented him from being tiresome, yet he was naturally talkative, and the buoyancy of his spirits made him eager to communicate to others the feelings of happiness by which he was then excited. He seemed anxious to be upon good terms with every one in the diligence. In short his good nature was such, and even his slightness in such good taste, that I at least became interested in him, although I am much better disposed to weep with those who weep, than to laugh with those who are joyful.

On a sudden our vehicle stopped; our progress was impeded by a crowd of men, women, and children, all mingling their cries with the notes of a dozen fiddles, the pressing invitations of two merry-andrews, and the energetic remonstrances of four gendarmes. We were in the midst of a fair.

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'Ursula!' repeated M. Maurice, looking at the woman with an air of surprise.

'Yes,' replied the latter, giving him the almanac; 'look! the 21st,—that is to-day—St. Ursula's day.'

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We were at that hour of the day so solemnly described by Alighieri,

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an hour at which even the postillions cease to swear, and involuntarily participate in the calmness spread over nature. Silence led to reverie, reverie to sleep; and neither of us knew how time had latterly passed when the coach stopped, and we found ourselves at Chalons-sur-Saone. Here we had supper. The linen was clean, the fare excellent, and all seemed well satisfied, except M. Maurice.

The diligence again started. 'Are we out of Chalons?' constantly inquired M. Maurice.

'Why do you ask?' said at length one of the female passengers.

'Oh! I have no particular reason.'

'Were you ever before at Chalons?'

'Yes; I was once quartered there.'

Here the conversation ceased; for the motion of the coach, the darkness, and the heat of the weather, disposed us to sleep; to which, for my own part, I had yielded, when I was awoken by a horrible jolt: the vehicle had stopped.

'What is the matter? What has happened? But we had no time for conjecture; the door opened.—'There is still a vacant place,' said the conductor. This was true, and yet we grumbled, for we were so comfortable at that moment.

'Here's a young lady,' said the conductor, 'who will not take up much room;' and a small figure in white appeared upon the steps. 'She will not trouble you much, for she is deaf and dumb. I know her, and have already taken her twice to Lyons. The devil be with her!' said he in an under tone; 'she has always brought me bad luck: you can place her between you on the front seat. Take care of your horses, postillion!—The poor beasts seem frightened; they stopped suddenly before, and now they are rearing.—Woah!—so!—so!—Oh! you may be easy on that score, Monsieur le Cure, I will take good care of the young lady.' These last words were addressed to a man in the garb of a priest, whom, by the light of the coach lantern, we could perceive standing in the road.

The new comer having seated herself, the conductor gave the signal to the postillion, and off we started.—We were all anxious to know something of our new fellow-traveller, but as she was deaf and dumb that was impossible.

The women in the diligence, and particularly Madame Pinguet, seemed disposed to talk a little upon this double infirmity, but were prevented by the screams of the baby, which would neither sleep nor take the breast. An unpleasant sensation of cold now crept over us all. In vain did we pull up the glasses, and wrap our shawls and cloaks about us,—we all felt chilled.

M. Maurice at length let down the glass on his side, declaring that the external air was warmer than the atmosphere we breathed in the diligence; and, without being able to assign a cause for it, we found that he was right. But though we now shivered a little less, we nevertheless all complained of a dreadfully uneasy sensation. The deaf and dumb girl who had come among us, was laughingly declared to be the cause of our feelings; a general malediction was jestingly cast upon her, and each endeavoured again to relapse into sleep: but this was impossible. One awoke in a fright—another was continually starting—a third had frightful dreams—and I shook and awoke M. Maurice, who was moaning dreadfully: he told me he had the nightmare. Amid these uncomfortable feelings, which seemed like a sudden blight fallen upon our hearts, the poor deaf and dumb girl was forgotten. The first beams of day, reflected upon her white dress, at length attracted our attention towards her. We long looked at her in silent astonishment: for we seemed fearful of trusting to our own senses. Each of us thought that it was an illusion, or the effect of twilight. But the sun soon appeared above the horizon, and put an end to our doubts. Our fellow traveller struck us with affright. Her skin, of a livid and deadly white, seemed just fastened upon her bare bones; the orbits of her eyes presented an immense circumference; her thin skinny lips could scarcely cover a perfect set of projecting teeth; and the muscles and blood vessels of her neck stood out in strong relief. In a word, her face was a perfect death's head, with the exception of two small eyes, sparkling like

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live coals from the bottom of their immense orbits, and a vivacity of motion which made her turn her singular countenance from one side to the other with an appearance of insatiable curiosity. After scanning the strange figure for a considerable time, we looked at each other, in silence, as if fear had tied our tongues. The little black eyes of the object of our surprise seemed to interrogate us in succession, and her large mouth smiled, but with an expression of gaiety so out of character with her countenance, that we cast down our eyes under the glance of hers: she seemed like death laughing in our faces. Now that we have read the 'Fantastic Tales,' such an object might appear simple enough, but, in 1812, it seemed to us like the wild phantasm of a dream.

M. Maurice spoke first. 'But for my respect for the present company, I would say with the conductor, "The Devil take her!" Did you ever see such a face as hers? I have often beheld corpses on the field of battle, I have also seen dissecting-rooms; but never did I—Upon my soul, she makes us all shudder. Look at the poor little baby; it is too much afraid even to cry.'

Meantime, the poor object of these remarks looked at us all, and burst into a fit of laughter; but to the sight only, for we heard no sound. This silent laughter raised in us feelings of horror, but not the least sympathy for her misfortunes. I know not what confessions we should have made to each other concerning our feelings, had not the axletree broke. I shall say nothing of the confusion consequent upon such an accident. The deaf and dumb girl quickly scrambled over our prostrate bodies, and got out first. When we had followed her, and stood contemplating the carriage lying upon its side, and our baggage strewn about the road, we were content to offer short congratulations to each other on the preservation of our lives. Not so the conductor: he gave vent to curses and imprecations.

'Did I not tell you so?' he exclaimed; 'that cursed little dead woman, as they call her in her own neighbourhood, has brought this misfortune upon us. This is the third time she has gone in my coach to Lyons. The first time, one of the horses fell dead; the second, a postillion broke his leg, and now—'

A house by the road side offered us an asylum whilst the diligence was being repaired. There the conductor deposited us, whilst a postillion mounted one of the horses to fetch the blacksmith and wheelwright from a neighboring village.

It was not yet nine o'clock, and we thought this a good opportunity for taking a comfortable breakfast. The weather was beautiful; the sun shone brightly, and, whilst our meal was getting ready, we rambled about the neighbourhood. But the scenery was not very picturesque or beautiful. There was indeed nothing to attract attention save a huge cross, about fifty yards from the house, surrounded by three young elms. A few branches of sweetbrier and common bramble were gently waving around a small grass plot extending round the stone at the foot of the cross. All this was very common; but it was so tastefully done, that it would have formed a beautiful little vignette for a Keepsake.

'Well,' said Maurice, 'as I have nothing else to do, I will sketch this pretty spot.'

At this moment Madame Pinguet knelt upon the stone, and began to tell a long chaplet of beads.

'Admirable!' continued Maurice, 'she will be a good figure in my sketch.—Can you conceive anything like that young girl? I really can't bear to look at her. Yet how cruel is her fate! for she is young, and perhaps susceptible of love.'

'Young!' I exclaimed.

'Yes, her motions and attitudes show youth, and extreme youth too. When at a distance, she might inspire interest; but this feeling is destroyed the moment she appears.'

'I assure you,' I said, 'that in the coach she seemed disposed to flirt with you, for she looked at you as if she desired to catch your attention.'

'The poor wretch,' said M. Maurice, as he raised his black silk cravat, and twirled his well-curled mustachios. 'The little dead woman a coquette! And why not? Oh! woman, woman!'

'I should not suppose that you had much reason to complain. Have you been often in love?'

'Yes, but it never lasted more than a week.'

'And yet you are going to be married.'

'Oh! that is very different. A woman takes your name and you administer her property; and then you have children to whom you leave your places and titles. But this is not what I term love. Augusta is charming—but I have known so many charming women. Marriage is good, because it fixes you in the station you are to live in. But love is the most delightful pastime that—'

Madame Pinguet arose, and fetching the deaf and dumb girl, who was in the midst of a herd of goats playing with the animals, made signs to the poor creature to kneel and pray with her at the foot of the cross. I know not what the girl had at first thought Madame Pinguet wanted, but she had quietly suffered herself to be led under the elms. But when the good lady endeavoured to make her kneel, she tripped away laughingly, and returned to the goats, which she at length led to browse upon the briar that formed so graceful a hedge round the cross.

'She is the genius of evil,' Maurice exclaimed, 'and the horror with which she inspires me is instinct. Look, she is destroying the only beauty in this landscape.'

At this moment the old goatherd and his dogs came and drove away the goats from the hedge. The little dead woman followed them, whilst Maurice and I advanced towards the old man, and requested that he would continue to protect this little spot. The goatherd knew nothing of landscape effects or sketches; but he informed us, that he prevented his goats from eating the bushes and grass of the enclosure, because, at the foot of the cross, where the grass was thickest, a female had been buried about eighteen months before.

'Was she then murdered on that spot?' inquired Maurice.

'I believe not, sir,' the goatherd replied. 'However, she lodged at the house where you are waiting. The people there can tell you all about her. I was not then in the country.'

The moment we reached the house, Maurice interrogated our hostess, whom the other travellers were urging to hasten the breakfast. As she was laying the cloth, she informed them that a young girl arrived at her house one rainy night. She was weary and sad, and her eyes seemed inflamed with weeping. She retired to a private room, in which she shut herself up for nearly a month, paying her expenses each day; but these expenses were very trifling, because she scarcely ate anything. She used to roam about at night, and was often seen sitting upon the stones at the foot of the cross. One day she was found dead under one of the elms, to a branch of which she had hanged herself with a silk handkerchief. The branch had given way, and in her fall her temple had come in contact with one of the stones, which as the doctor said, was the cause of her death.

'The Mayor came and scolded us,' continued the hostess, for having harboured a vagabond; for she had not a single paper with her to show who she was.—The priest refused to bury her, or to allow her remains to be interred in consecrated ground; but I had pity on her poor young corpse—I begged that it might be buried near the cross; for the ground there must be almost as good as consecrated ground. Besides, she had given me her will, enclosed in an old frame which I sold to her, after taking from it a fine portrait of the

Emperor; and I have also placed it in the public room, as she requested I would.'

There was now a general call for the will, which the hostess produced in a glazed frame of black wood; but the glass was so dirty that we could not read a word. At our request it was washed, and the frame put into the hands of M. Maurice.

On looking at the writing, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, and changed colour.

'Well!' said I, with curiosity.

'How singular!' he exclaimed.

'You seem to know the hand-writing!' I said.

'I!—how should I know it? A will! Our good hostess calls complaints and lamentations a will.'

'Let me read them.'

M. Maurice's hand trembled, and he continued to exclaim as if unconsciously: 'This is very singular; quite extraordinary!'

I took the frame out of Maurice's hands, for he still held it, though he had done reading the paper, and I copied the following lines written with a somewhat unsteady hand:—

'Be silent, if you recognize my hand-writing; on my knees I implore you not to tell my name, for I shall be afraid of my father even after death; I am dishonoured; and I must die. It is a dreadful thing; but I cannot act otherwise, I have no more money, no strength to work, and he whom I love bade me farewell with laughter.'

As I read these simple wailings of a seared heart, the hostess and the female passengers showed by their sobs, how much they were affected: even the men betrayed emotion. Madame Pinguet uttered a vehement philippic against male perfidy. She said, indeed, nothing new, but she repeated all that had been said before on the subject, and became much warmer because M. Maurice, who had recovered his presence of mind, was endeavouring to turn the whole into ridicule. The other man composing our party, sided with the kind-hearted Madame Pinguet, and although M. Maurice reproached the latter, all the honours of the discussion were won by the fair devotee.

'It is fortunate,' exclaimed M. Maurice, 'that our lovely little fellow-traveller from Chalons is condemned to silence, for I should have had her also for an antagonist; and I confess, that such a face talking of love and romance would have proved irresistible.'

This recalled the little dead woman to our recollection; and we now for the first time remarked that she was not present at breakfast. The conductor informed us that she never sat at table, but contented herself with a crust of dry bread. I looked through the open door, and saw her distributing this bread to the goats, by which she was surrounded. Poor creature! the animals, after taking from her hand the good she offered them, hastily fled from her, as if frightened at her aspect.

The coach being repaired, we proceeded on our journey, during which we constantly felt a damp chill difficult to account for, and experienced a physical and mental uneasiness, which spread sadness among us, and put a stop to all conversation. In spite of his efforts, M. Maurice was unable to resume his appearance of unconcern, and his lively conversation of the preceding day.

We were delighted when we reached Lyons, and M. Maurice and I agreed to embark in one of the passage-boats which descends the Rhone, he for Valence, and I for Avignon. We met with pleasure upon the deck of this vessel, and he had recovered his gaiety. I was now better acquainted with him, and had received from him more circumstantial details about his fortune and his prospects of future happiness. He was really one of the most fortunate men of his age, and his expectations were of the highest and most brilliant kind.

The navigation of the Rhone is disagreeable at this season of the year; the sources whence this river is

supplied are already frozen, and its waters are consequently low." Our great and unwieldy boat grounded so often, that on the second day we were obliged to sleep at a gloomy and wretched inn at Pomer. The kitchen was the only public room, and by the dim light of its iron lamp, the first thing we discovered in a corner were the flashing eye-balls of the little dead woman.

"I cannot stand this," said Maurice; "I had much rather return and sleep in the boat. Had I known she would have chosen this conveyance, I certainly should have gone by land." On saying this, he left the house, and a moment after I perceived that the young girl was also absent. The tobacco smoke soon forced me to take a walk in the open air until the repast, which the host and hostess were pleased to call a supper, was ready.

I bent my footsteps towards the Rhone, whose waters I heard gently murmuring under the beams of the moon, which heavy clouds driven by a wind in the upper regions of the atmosphere now and then overcast. In the midst of a willow grove, I thought I perceived M. Maurice, and near him a small figure in white.

"Why how is this?" thought I.

A dark cloud now passed across the moon, and I saw him no more; but I heard a loud laugh, and the name of Ursula pronounced, and immediately after a splash as of a heavy body falling into the water, interrupted the uniformity of its murmurs. I called Maurice; he answered not. The moon again shone forth in her splendour, and I looked for him and the deaf and dumb girl: both had disappeared. My voice had however, attracted the attention of the boatmen.

"Two persons are in the water," I exclaimed in terror, "they will be drowned."

The boatmen ran to the place. Torches were lighted, the river searched, and in the course of half an hour the body of Maurice was discovered among the reeds. All our efforts for his recovery were of no avail; the last spark of life had fled. The body of the little dead woman was never found.

I shall not state the conclusion to which I have come upon the above facts. The reader now knows as much as I do, and may, according to his own ideas, account for the agitation of Maurice on hearing the name of Ursula, his impatience to get beyond Chalons, the catastrophe which prevented his marriage, and the impression produced upon him by the little dead woman, my description of whom is really not an imaginary one.

#### O'KEEFE'S RECOLLECTIONS.

(Continued.)

##### An Immovable Person.

Mossop was so correct and particular, that in the parts he studied from, (one of which I saw and read,) he had marked in the margin even the expression of the face, the raising and lowering of the eyebrows, and the projection of an under-lip. In his acting he had a certain distinct spot upon the stage for almost every speech. One night, 'Venice Preserved' being the play, Knight, who was the Reinhold, being rather imperfect, requested the Prompter to take care and watch him. "I will," said the Prompter, "when you are at my side; but when you are O. P. I cannot be bawling to you across the stage." "Never mind that," replied Knight, "that's my business."

All went on well until the scene of the meeting of the conspirators, when Mossop, (the Pierre,) according to settled business, had to cross over to the Prompter's side. Accordingly he would have advanced exactly to the spot—but there stuck Reinhold! Mossop, in an under tone, desired him to get out of his way. "I cannot, sir," he replied, still keeping his ear as close as possible to the Prompter and his book.—This rather heightened the fury of the embarrassed Pierre. After a few ineffectual attempts to drive

Knight from his post, Mossop went on, and never was the reproof against the conspirators, particularly Reinhold, spoken by Mossop with more spirit and bitterness than upon that night.

##### Mossop and the Property-man.

There was in Crow-street theatre a comedian of the name of Walker, who had a very large nose, which helped out the laugh much. One night, when Rowe's tragedy of 'Jane Shore' was under performance, Mossop, standing at the side as Lord Hastings, ready to go on, saw near him a new property-man, with a large loaf under his arm. The following dialogue took place between them, much to the amusement of the standers by:—"What have you got there?"—"My property, sir, for the last act."—"What act? what property?"—"Why, sir, it is for Mr. Walker, who does the baker."—"Baker! and what's that loaf for?"—"Why, sir, you ought to know best; but is it not for the baker to throw after Jane Shore as she is walking starving about the streets?"—"Go along, sir," said Mossop sternly, "you and it; and I wish Mr. Walker would keep to his musical comedies, and not show himself, that is to say, his nose, at all while tragedy is going on; and, for the future, do you take your list of properties from the Prompter himself, and not from laughing jokers."

##### Mossop and the Fiddler.

Arrigoni, the fine performer on the violin, and leader of the band at Smock-alley theatre, seldom retired into the music-room while the play was going on, but remained to see it. Mossop was playing Zanga one night, when Arrigoni, who was sitting alone in the orchestra, happened accidentally to take up the bow of his fiddle which was lying before him. This occurred in one of Zanga's finest scenes, a soliloquy, I think. On going off the stage he sent for Arrigoni to the green-room, and gave him a most severe reproof.

"I happened, sir, to cast my eye upon you when you were fingering your fiddle-bow, and it put me out so much that—"

"Sir," said Arrigoni, "I only rubbed a little rosin on my bow, to prepare it for my violin-concerto between the play and the farce."

"Your fiddle-concertos, sir," replied Mossop, "are not to disconcert my tragedy; and I desire in future that you will keep your hands quiet, or else make yourself an absentee from the orchestra while my scene is going on."

##### A new kind of 'Jolly'-Boat.

A fellow-student of mine had a boat of his own, in which he amused himself and his companions on the Liffey. I met him one day with his palette and pencils, and, on my enquiring whither he was going, he asked me to help him out with a touch, as he was going to new-paint his boat himself. Of oil-painting I knew nothing; but, having the style of all the Italian and Flemish painters full in my imagination, I thought of Teniers and Homskirch, &c., and when we got into the boat I told him to sit down and be quiet: then, taking his palette and pencils, I dashed out upon a board a party of jowials drinking round a table. All had comic faces, some with wigs turned awry, and they were variously smoking, laughing, singing, &c., all grotesque, but natural, and according to the rules of design, for I had been well instructed in drawing.

My young friend was wonderfully delighted. The board, when dry, was placed in the boat, opposite to where the boat-guests sat, in full view of all; and it had a pleasant and whimsical effect. Indeed it answered a good purpose; for if any of the youths got crusty or quarrelsome, a single glance at my merry pencil-work would change a frown into a hearty laugh. We often crowded the boat to take water-excursions at the hazard of drowning ourselves and my 'drinking jowials.'

##### An odd mark of Distinction.

At the time when there was a great talk in England of 'The Flying Highwayman,' Digges, in Macheath, was in high favour with the town. He wore a round hat, which was at that time unusual, and in the front of it he always stuck a turnpike ticket. Being asked the reason of this singular *affiche*, he answered—"Macheath is one who mixes with the world at large, men of play, &c., whereas 'The Flying Highwayman' is a wild animal who springs over turnpikes and cannot be caught. Now this ticket shows I am not he, for I pay the turnpikes."

Digges was the best Macheath I ever saw, in person, song, and manner.

##### The Harmony of Contrast.

There came over to Dublin, as a show, a beautiful little foreigner, a female, about twenty-five years of age, and not above three feet high. Previously to this she had been at most of the courts of Europe. She was elegantly formed, and had a very handsome face: her conversation, accomplishments, and polite manner were captivating. Robert Mahon, before he came upon the stage at all, was, like his father, by profession a dancing-master; and, at his benefit at Crow-street, he put in his bill that he would dance a minuet with the Corsican Fairy.

After the fourth act of the play, the stage being clear, he, five feet eleven inches in height, led on this three-foot partner. Both were in full dress of the fashion of the day. The orchestra played Marshal Saxe's (or what is called Woffington's) minuet, which, before the *Minuet de la Cour* was composed, was the air always danced to on such occasions. In the course of the dance, Mahon had to put on his three-cocked hat, which made him look above six feet two, and to take his partner's hand, and lead her to the front of the stage; yet their movements were so graceful, and their dancing so excellent, that all tendency to laughter and ridicule was effectually kept off; and the interests of Terpsichore, in the hands of the little lady and tall gentleman, had a full triumph.

##### Terrors of a Debut.

The first appearance of Mahon at Covent Garden theatre was in the opera of 'Thomas and Sally.' The second act opens with the entrance of Thomas, who, attended by a number of sailors, has to come from the lower end of the stage, and approach the lights, while the symphony is being played. Although Mahon had a strong party of friends in the house, to support him as the phrase is, and although he was a most scientific singer, he was so frightened at appearing before a London audience, that at the very moment for beginning his song, 'From ploughing the ocean,' &c., he could not remember a single word. To go on was, with the orchestra, an *obligato* affair; and they did so, but somewhat piano, after the proper method of accompanying the voice. Though perfectly oblivious of every syllable, Mahon felt the necessity of letting the sound of his voice be heard, and therefore, making an effort, he blurted out an irregular series of sounds, which, however, he managed to keep in unison with the first violin. The audience were all attention and silence; but still they heard nothing but the wordless notes from him. The other actors who were on with him were confounded and ashamed, and endeavoured to throw him the words; but, in his bewilderment, poor Mahon could not catch a single one. At length the patience of the audience was tired out; and, perhaps through attributing his odd manner to another cause, a multitude of hisses (distressing sound to actor's ear!) arose from all parts of the house.

In the sequel, however, Mahon made amends a thousand-fold, by his merits as a singer and actor, for this one unfortunate lapse.

##### Constructive use of Skulls.

When at Sligo, I saw a wonderful and stupendous monument of antiquity, the ruins of the great church. It was in a roofless condition; but the massy walls



and the high altar remained. A number of rugged steps led up to the latter, before which, at a few yards' distance, and exactly in the centre, was a pyramid, about twelve feet high, quite regular in its form, composed of human skulls. On each side was a wall, five or six feet high, three feet wide, and about ten feet long, perfectly exact in shape, and consisting entirely of human bones. At a short distance from this ruin stood a large edifice, once the mansion of the Countess of Desmond, celebrated in Irish history.

*A Liberal Tribute to the Medical Character.*

During the first season I was in Cork, there was a stagnant pool close by the town. The physicians and other medicals had a meeting about it, and drew up a report that the existence of such a nuisance was prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants. These, adopting the example thus suggested, all signed it, and presented it to the mayor and aldermen. The pond was thereupon filled up, and the nuisance and danger done away with. Was not this a piece of disinterested candour on the part of those whose living depends on the sickness of others? Indeed, this disposition, notwithstanding Foote's 'Devil on Two Sticks,' Moliere's 'Malade Imaginaire,' and my own Dr. Grigby, in 'The World in a Village,' is a real attribute of physicians all over the world; a general kindness of heart is prevalent among the class. In my own case I remember two excellent instances—Dr. Saunders and Dr. Reynolds, who, on my pressing upon them repeatedly the usual fees, refused, in nearly the same words, though at an interval of several years respectively,—'No, no, my good sir; I have been indebted to you for many an evening's intellectual enjoyment.'

*A handy Rejoinder.*

The Cork ladies have a reputation for good humour, pleasantry, and wit. One day, at a dinner party where I was present, a lady asked another, who was remarkable for great length of arms, to reach her something, adding—'But you must stretch a long arm.' 'I have it at hand' was the answer.

*A Retort in kind.*

When the celebrated Father O'Leary was once dining in a large company, where a very young English officer was present, the latter, concluding that O'Leary, from religion and function, had more affection for a Stuart than a Guelf, gave a toast thus—'Father O'Leary, here's the king!—not your king.' O'Leary quietly took up his brimming glass, and, keeping exactly to the words of the toast, said, 'Captain, here's the king!—not your king.'

*The two Volunteers in an Involuntary Situation.*

At the time when the Dublin volunteers were embodied, enthusiasm was very high. Crawford and Daly, the rival managers of Crow-street and Smock-alley theatres, who were by no means on good terms with each other, belonged to the same corps. One day in a march through the town, the commanding officer, by an arch manœuvre, contrived that these two fine, tall, handsome figures of rivals, armed, and in full regimentals, should walk side by side. As the corps stopped on, it afforded much amusement to the spectators to watch the countenances of each, compelled by duty and patriotism to a comportment which every body knew was far from their minds.

*"An Excuse for the Glass."*

Jack Kane, the actor, had a little horse, called 'Shelly,' which he put up to be raffled for. The terms were, that the setters-up and the winner should give a dinner and a dozen of claret. Shelly was won, and the terms complied with, which made a very merry day. The winner immediately set him up again; and thus, by the continuance of the same terms, another merry day was made. Again and again was the same process repeated; in short, it went on through the whole play-acting season, so that Shelly was constantly set up, raffled for, and won. Strange to say, however, no one ever saw the little horse subsequently to the first setting up; for either he was sold, or taken to

some distant place, or perhaps he died months before the end of the raffling. However that may be, both setter-up and winner, with hearty good will, kept to the original terms; and the jolly set went on raffling the dice-box, and throwing their cinque and quatre for Shelly, without more inquiry. Nobody ever asked what stable or pasture Shelly was in, at the time.—The only cry of these bon-vivants was—'Come, now for a throw for Shelly!'

*A good reason for bad acting.*

When Wilder was one evening playing Young Meadows, in 'Love in a Village,' some one made a remark, how badly he acted. I ventured to account for it, by replying,—'Of course; how should it be otherwise? Young Meadows is *be-Wilder-ed*.'

*Dawson the Player.*

In the play scene of Hamlet, George Dawson, in his young days, had to perform 'one Lucianus, Nephew to the Duke,' and, at his entrance, was so much frightened, that he stood still and silent. Mossop, sitting on the ground at Ophelia's feet, addressed him, as usual, with 'Come, murderer, leave your damnable faces and begin.' This frightened the boy still more, as at the moment, he forgot these words were really in Mossop's part, and thought they were addressed to his own very self. The elder Dawson, his father, was the Polonius of the night; and standing on the lower step of the throne, watched the whole affair with Gentleman-usher-like propriety. George, with the little bottle in his hand, and drawing close to the lower curl of the player-king, asleep in his chair, repeated,—'Hands black—no—thoughts black—and time agreeing, and no creature seeing—the mixture vile of—of—of.' Here he happened to cast a look towards the angry face of his father, who bit his lips, and shook his wand at him, in wrath and reproach. Unable to recollect another word of the speech, he hastily cried out—'Into your ear it goes!' and, dashing down the bottle, ran away, to the horror of his father, the anger of Mossop, and the amusement of every body else.

Though young George could make but little of a printer's devil, or a mock assassin, he became afterwards quite a favorite comedian, and an excellent harlequin. In the latter, he one night had nearly tragedized the pantomime. Pantaloon, clown, and other fools, being in full chase after him, he had to make his escape by leaping through the scene. The carpenters, as in duty and custom bound, ought to have received him behind the scenes, by holding a carpet ready. Unmindful of this, they were taking their mug of ale; no carpet was there, and, as it fell out, poor Harlequin George fell down on the boards—a descent of some eight or nine feet. Happily no bones were broken; but through this act of negligence he was most severely hurt, and kept out of employment many months.

*Scenic Recollections.*

At the bottom of the stupendous Powerscourt Waterfall, on Lord Powerscourt's estate, among the Wicklow Mountains, there was, in my earlier days, a pavilion, with its thatched roof supported by the trunks of the tall trees; it formed, internally, an octagonal room, about thirty feet every way; it was open, except on two sides, but you could occasionally shut or throw up each flat at an instant. Here were sofas, a cupboard of china, tea-things, plates, glasses, knives, forks, kettles, &c.; a closet of books, no attendance, and 'nothing to pay.' Any parties that might choose to resort thither brought their own tea and cold provisions. Nothing was ever stolen, or destroyed, or defaced—a circumstance to the honour of the liberal-minded owner of this delightful spot, and highly to the credit of the inhabitants of so large a metropolis as Dublin.

The Dargle, or Dark Glen, in that quarter (where I have spent alone, or with my young companions, or accompanied by my family, many happy hours, and

indeed days,) is a vast mountain, torn in the centre by the giant-hands of nature, and presenting an ensemble of deep and grand caverns, rocks, trees, precipices, waters in dark abysses, and golden streams, such as no language or pencil can describe. Myrtles and arbutus were here in wild profusion. There were winding paths to make accessible the steepest heights and depths, with seats and recesses, and a beautiful place of rest, called the Moss-House. This all-charming and astonishing spot is, or was, free to the stranger. No spider-ciceroe to start upon you with a croaking voice of routine explanation, and an outstretched paw of venality. You had all these enchanting beauties of nature for nothing!

The Dargle is ten Irish miles from Dublin: there are three different ways to it from thence; one is out from Stephen's Green, where you get on the sea-beach. Another is through Donnybrook. This route is very elevated, and commands a view of the sea, the bay, and the hill of Howth, all the way. The third, and most inland road, is from Dublin out of Kevin's Port, and you immediately rise upon the Wicklow Mountains, and continue among them until you reach Powerscourt.

At Lord Powerscourt's house is an octagonal room, lined with looking-glass, as is also the ceiling.—The floor is inlaid with a sort of mosaic in ivory, ebony, &c. in very beautiful symmetry.

When at the Dargle, I have often gone to sleep on a moss-bank, lulled by the roar of the Powerscourt Waterfall. Throughout the whole domain one met with pretty recesses, benches, and every means to accommodate, charm and refresh the visitor.

I quitted Ireland in June 1781, and never since returned to my native land. Forty-eight years I have been now in England (1829), but, during my weary pilgrimage in and about London, roughing it through every obstacle in my way to fame, and, as I hoped, to fortune, my Irish mind has been often at the Dargle and Powerscourt, when it ought to have confined itself to those dramatic temples, Covent-garden, Drury-lane and the Haymarket theatres.

*A happy deliverance.*

On one occasion a fire happened at my house in Eustace-street, Dublin. After sitting up late with a party at supper, I had to pass through the room in which my two infants, Tottenham and Adelaide, slept, in order to get to my own bed-room. On opening the door, flames and smoke burst full upon me. The curtains of their little beds were in one blaze. Both were asleep. I snatched them up in my arms, and ran down stairs with them,—not without our being all a little scorched. Their mother found afterwards, on inquiry, that they had been left by their maid (as she supposed) asleep, and that, on finding themselves alone, they got out of bed and ran to the fire, where they began kindling-straws and bits of stick. Our unusually late supper that night saved my poor dear children.

*The Princess Dashkoff.*

When I was in Cork, I saw the Russian Princess Dashkoff, the favorite of Catharine, Empress of Russia, who cuts such a famous figure in the revolution of that day. I do not know the cause of her being at Cork. It was said she was banished by her gentle friend, gray Katty, who was so kind to Warsaw. She lived on the Mall, in lodgings of twelve guineas a-week. I saw her at the play, in a side-box. She was not young, but I could perceive that she attracted more attention than the performers. On her first entering, she took out a large coloured silk handkerchief, and spread it over the edge of her box,—not a mode with the Cork, or any other Irish, or Great British ladies. This Princess Dashkoff was certainly not very far from my mind when writing the character of Mrs. Cheshire (Rusty Fusty) in 'The Agreeable Surprise.'

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